



*Date:* July 8, 2015

*To:* Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Authorized Representatives

*From:* Community Nutrition Team

*Subject:* USDA Farm to School Program: Preschool Edition



United States Department of Agriculture



July 7, 2015 | Volume 4, Issue 17

## Feature

### Farm to preschool resources

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has a cornucopia of resources to support the burgeoning movement to introduce more local foods and food education into early childhood education and care settings.

**Fact sheet (pdf):** Hot off the (digital) presses, the USDA Farm to School team published a new fact sheet focused on preschool settings. This resource presents basic information about farm to preschool efforts, including tips and resources.



**Policy memo (pdf):** Want to dig deep into finding out how to integrate local food into your Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)? Look back at this March 2015 memo for guidance on incorporating local foods and agriculture-based curriculum in early childhood education and care settings. It gets right to the point with a Q&A section on procuring, growing, and accepting donated local food for CACFP programs.

[Farm to Preschool Webpage](#): You can find even more resources on FNS's Farm to Preschool webpage. Curriculum and menu ideas and procurement guidance will inspire you to get started or take your program a step further.

Learn more >



*Children's garden at Colorado Springs Family Development Center*

## Farm to preschool in action

The Colorado Springs Family Development Center is a daycare located on the University of Colorado campus. The center operates CACFP and implements a number of farm to preschool initiatives, including a garden and nutrition education activities. The children handle all aspects of the garden, including planting, weeding, harvesting, and of course, eating the “fruits” of their labor. The center director, Ida Bauer, said that the children love working in the garden and are more willing to try new foods as a result of their connection to the soil. Bauer also noted that getting kids into the garden helps children foster emotional and social development through play, and connects them to the earth and to the food they eat. See more of the garden [here](#) (pdf).

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## Notes from the Field

## Spotlight on Summer: Madison, WI



### *Describing local green beans*

In Madison, WI, a large urban school district and a strong nonprofit partner are working to not only source fresh, local foods for summer meals, but also to educate and engage kids at summer sites. For the second summer in a row, [Madison Metropolitan School District's Summer Food Service Program](#) and [REAP Food Group's Farm to School Program](#) are serving up local produce to kids and teens across the city at 43 summer meal sites. This summer, locally-grown veggies sourced and processed through the [WI Innovation Kitchens](#) are in abundance. Kids are enjoying local cucumbers, green beans, snap peas, radishes, summer squash, and kohlrabi. What's more, REAP staff and volunteers visit the summer meal sites to ensure that kids know about their food and where it comes from. Kids have the opportunity to share thoughts through this descriptive tasting board, which captures students' feedback to encourage thoughtfulness and make sure that the items and recipes are approved. We love how this variety of fresh, local foods are served alongside educational conversations and engagement!

*Tell us how you bring the farm to your summer meals program! Send us your anecdote and we'll select model programs to feature in our communications throughout the summer.*

[Share your story >](#)

## Local Food, Local Places initiative applications

"Local food is not only a business opportunity for agriculture, it can also be a development tool that allows communities to maximize the impact of what is grown and made locally. Local food projects can help grow local food economies and drive downtown and neighborhood revitalization..." wrote Tom Vilsack, USDA's Secretary of Agriculture, in a [recent blog](#).

[Local Foods, Local Places](#) is a federal initiative that helps communities integrate local food systems into their economic development plans, including farm to school activities. Communities participating in the program are implementing projects such as: creating year-round, downtown markets featuring foods from local farmers; building centrally located community kitchens or food hubs to aggregate and market local foods; assisting schoolchildren to grow their own food and making healthy local food accessible to families; and developing community gardens in walkable, bike-able, transit-accessible places.

Local Foods, Local Places is preparing for a second year of projects. Applications are due by September 15, 2015.

[Learn more >](#)



### Produce Webinar

**Become a Vendor for the Pilot Project for Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits & Vegetables**

**Thursday, August 13, 2015 at 2:00 pm EDT:** Join USDA's Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) to learn more about becoming a vendor for the pilot. FNS and AMS are conducting the [pilot project](#) in eight states (California, Connecticut, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin). Several of the states involved are interested in the pilot as a means to promote local purchases and farm to school initiatives. AMS is seeking additional vendors for this project, and this webinar will detail how to become one. Registration is required and space is limited, so sign up today!

[Sign up now >](#)

## Behind the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Initiative: Matt Russell



*Posted by Elanor Starmer, Senior Advisor to the  
Secretary on Local and Regional Food Systems*

“The term ‘farm to school’ involves thinking of the whole plate, so to speak. It’s about increasing the amount of local and regional foods served in school cafeterias while also increasing education and community outreach for kids, and creating market opportunities for producers.”

So says Matt Russell, Grant Program Manager for the [Farm to School Program](#) at USDA’s [Food and Nutrition Service \(FNS\)](#). Matt works to support school districts, non-profits, and other stakeholders in bringing more local and regional food into the school meal program.

[Read more >](#)

Learn more at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool> or contact us at [farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov](mailto:farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov).

Not yet subscribed to the Farm to School E-letter? Join us by clicking [here](#).

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